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Sheet 1 of 1

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Correspondence (CCN) No:	Rev: N/A						
Document No: 24590-WTP-PER-M-02-001	Rev: 2						
Project Information (Check Applicable Box) <input type="checkbox"/> Balance of Facilities <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pretreatment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> HLW Vitrification <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> LAW Vitrification <input type="checkbox"/> Analytical <input type="checkbox"/> External Interfaces <input type="checkbox"/> Across all areas							
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Document title:

Material Selections for Building Secondary Containment/Leak Detection

Contract number: DE-AC27-01RV14136

Department: Mechanical Systems

Author(s): JR Divine *Handwritten: Avail for 8/8/02*

Principal author
signature:

Document number: 24590-WTP-PER-M-02-001, Rev 2

Checked by: GS Singh *Handwritten signature*

Checker signature: *Handwritten: 8/8/02*

Date of issue:

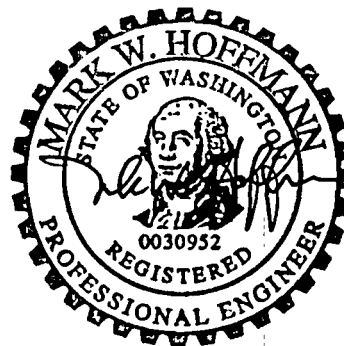
Issue status: Issued for Permitting Use

Approved by: MW Hoffmann

Approver's position: Deputy Manager

Approver signature: *Handwritten signature of Mark W. Hoffmann*

ISSUED BY
RPP/WTP/PDC
Handwritten: 8-11-02
INIT DATE



EXPIRES 12/10/02

This bound document contains a total of 8 sheets

Handwritten signature of Mark W. Hoffmann
Signature

Handwritten: 8/8/02
Date

River Protection Project
Waste Treatment Plant
3000 George Washington Way
Richland, WA 99352
United States of America
Tel: 509 371 3500
Fax: 509 371 3504

History Sheet

Rev	Date	Reason for revision	Revised by
0	7/1/02	Initial issue	JR Divine
1	7/11/02	Added text	JR Divine
2	8/6/02	Issued for Permitting Use	JR Divine

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1 Introduction

The Washington Administrative Code, Chapter 173-303 WAC, *Dangerous Waste Regulations*, requires the use of secondary containment for systems containing dangerous waste. This report discusses the potential use of coatings and stainless steel for use as secondary containment in the Balance of Facility (BOF) as well as the High Level Waste (HLW), Low Activity Waste (LAW), Pre-Treatment (PTF), and Laboratory (LAB) facilities. It also describes the probes used in the sumps for leak detection.

Any fluids released to the secondary containment will flow to the sumps. Sumps that are always dry except for off-normal situations will be constructed of ASTM A240 grade 304L (304L) or a higher grade: ASTM A240 grade 316L (316L) stainless steel, six percent molybdenum (6% Mo) alloy. Sumps that are always wet will be a 6% Mo alloy. The fluid level in the sumps will be monitored by bubbler or radar level detectors.

2 Applicable Documents

None

3 Description

After describing selected system features and operating concerns, a brief description of the corrosion factors for sumps, liners, and leak detectors is discussed.

System Features

- ◆ Secondary containment shall be remotely flushed as needed. All cells with secondary containment are provided with wash rings that can flush the cell with eight-percent sodium hydroxide, twelve-percent nitric acid, or process water. The flush solution flows to sumps from which it is removed.
- ◆ Sumps that are normally dry will be flushed and drained. Wet sumps maintain a liquid level.
- ◆ Stainless steel liners are used in inaccessible areas. Coatings may be used where repair maintenance can be performed.
- ◆ The portion of the bubbler tube (leak detection) in the sump will be constructed of the same material, or better, as the sump.
- ◆ The bubblers are fed with dry process air or instrument air, dew point of forty degrees below zero Fahrenheit (-40°F).
- ◆ Airflow rates are sufficiently small that aerosols formed by the air bubbling through the liquid and that could deposit on the probe surfaces will not form.

- ◆ The bubblers are continuously operated at a pressure greater than or equal to the external pressure so that liquid does not rise in the bubbler.
- ◆ Depending on the design, the radar level detector wave-guide may or may not contact the liquid. Any portion of the wave-guide below the top of the sump will be constructed of the same material, or better, as the sump.

Considerations:

Several factors must be considered in specifying the materials of construction. These include temperature, lifetime dose, expected chemistry including pH (the negative logarithm of the hydrogen ion activity), and time of exposure.

Temperature - Most regions in the five facilities will operate in the 75-125°F range with an upper limit of 150°F. In exceptional regions, associated with the melters, air temperatures can significantly exceed 300°F. The liners will be at significantly less than 300°F due to the cell ventilation systems

Radiation - Details of the 40-y lifetime gamma radiation doses are being evaluated. However the doses are estimated to be as high as 26,000,000,000 rad.

pH - The pH within the vessels can vary depending on the operation. Solutions range from fifty percent sodium hydroxide to about forty percent nitric acid.

Time of Exposure – Time of exposure will affect the degree of uniform corrosion that can occur. Because pitting and cracking generally have some degree of incubation period, short exposures to potentially corrosive conditions may not have an effect.

3.1 Sumps

Sumps are of two varieties –dry and wet. Dry sumps may be constructed of 304L or higher grades, including 316L stainless steel and 6% Mo alloy. The wet sumps will have some liquid present. Because of uncertainties about the chemistry of the solutions in the sump, evaporation rates, and the effects at the liquid/air interface, the wet sumps will be a 6% Mo alloy such as UNS N08367 or N08926

3.2 Liners

3.2.1 Coatings

Both mechanical and chemical factors are important to coatings. The mechanical factors include foot traffic, fork lift operation, and dropping of equipment. The chemical effects include, but are not limited to, pH, radiation, and temperature.

Novolac type epoxies are available that can withstand temperatures to about 300°F, lifetime doses to about 200,000,000 rad, and concentrated caustic or nitric acid for several hours.

The combined effects of pH, temperature, and radiation are not defined but would be expected to lower all of the limits; no situation is expected where temperatures above 300°F will be combined with pH extremes.

A shorter exposure of coatings to any of above conditions will result in a longer coating life. Exceeding any of the above conditions would require access for maintenance of the coating.

To determine the level of protection needed, several leak options are evaluated:

High pH solutions.

All of the suggested coatings are subject to failure if there is extended exposure to strong caustic. Surfaces should be flushed within about two days.

Acid leaks in the absence of waste.

Coatings can be used if they can be washed within about two days otherwise they could be destroyed by long-term exposure (greater than several days depending on the concentration) to nitric acid. Failure of the coating could lead to massive exposure of concrete to acid solutions – coatings are not recommended.

Water leaks in the absence of waste.

Coatings are acceptable. Coatings are not recommended in high radiation areas where contact maintenance is not possible.

Acid or water (pH < 12) leak with waste present.

As noted above for acid leaks, coatings are not recommended except where maintenance is practicable. pH values near or less than about zero are of primary concern.

3.2.2 Metal liners

To determine the level of protection needed, several leak options are evaluated:

High pH solutions.

304L is resistant to caustic solutions.

Acid leaks in the absence of waste.

304L was specified as the liner material. The corrosion resistance of 304L is very good for nitric acid.

Water leaks in the absence of waste.

In the absence of waste, no failure of the 304L liner is expected.

Acid or water (pH < 12) leak with waste present.

With 304L, washing within a day of the leak is preferred. However, as the temperature of any leaking fluid on the liner will be much lower than that in the pipe/vessel, no

accelerated corrosion of the liner is anticipated. Further, because in a typical fabrication, the weld is always considered to be more prone to failure, vacuum box testing will be conducted on liner plate welds as a precautionary measure to minimize any porosity and subsequent seepage to the concrete.

3.3 Leak Detection

Should leaks occur, the fluids will flow to the sumps where probes that are based on radar level detectors or bubblers will detect the liquid in the sump. Bubbler tips will frequently be exposed to the solution whereas the radar wave guides are not expected to be exposed. Factors considered in reviewing the probe performance are:

- external environment
- internal environment
- immersion environment
- tip environment

The external environment of both probe types and the internal environment of the wave guide is air which is benign. The internal environment for bubblers is dry air and is extremely benign. The immersed portion of the probes will be in the same solution as the sump in which it is located. Due to the expected evaporation of the solution by the dry air, deposits may form on the bubbler tip. The rest of the immersed portion of the bubbler will be as resistive to corrosion as the sump in which the bubbler is located because it is made of the same material as the sump.

3.3.1 Bubblers

Because the instrument air or process air inside the bubbler are very dry, the solution at the bubbler tip will dry and any soluble material will precipitate onto the bubbler tip. Even under these conditions the uniform corrosion for the tip will be small, estimated at less than one mil (0.001 inch) per year. Cracking is not likely even if chloride builds up because the stresses at the tip are expected to be small and the material is the same as the sump; even if cracks occur, a cracked tip will not affect the bubbler operation.

On the other hand, pitting is possible. Pits, however, will be small and plugged with corrosion products. Little if any air loss will occur. Additionally, because the bubblers sense a pressure differential and not an absolute pressure, the loss of air is not critical.

3.3.2 Radar

The wave guide is not expected to be wetted. However, if it is, the duration should be sufficiently small that combined with the material of construction, no uniform corrosion is expected. Cracking and pitting are not likely, and the effect of small cracks or cracks in the wave guide is unknown.

Radar wave-guides are not expected to corrode significantly if immersed. Nevertheless, immersion of the wave guide is not recommended.

4 Conclusions

- ◆ Liners are required as a secondary containment.
- ◆ Coatings are not recommended as liners unless they can be maintained.
- ◆ 304L is acceptable for liners because it is compatible with the expected temperature and radiation limits. It is susceptible to corrosion under certain conditions that can be counteracted by remote flushing.
- ◆ Alloys better than 304L are not needed for the liner.
- ◆ Dry sumps will be constructed of 304L 316L stainless steel, or 6% Mo alloy. The remaining sumps should be constructed of a 6% Mo alloy.
- ◆ Because the immersed portions of the bubbler will be the same material of construction as the containing sump, the corrosion, in general, will be the same for both. However, because deposits are likely at the bubbler tip, it may pit at the tip. No significant effect on bubbler operation is anticipated.
- ◆ Immersion of radar wave guides is not recommended.